

REMARKS

The specification and claims have been amended in order to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the invention and to overcome various of the grounds of rejection set forth in the Official Letter. Inasmuch as no new matter is introduced by these amendments, entry thereof is respectfully requested.

A new Abstract has been provided in the specification as requested by the Examiner.

The informalities referred to by the Examiner have also been eliminated.

The rejection of claims 1-4 and 6-8 under 35 V.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lippert (3,386,182) in view of Brown (4,080,927) is respectfully traversed. In support of the rejection, the Examiner states:

“---Lippert teaches a process of wetting powder with a liquid substance (column 3, lines 25-40). This liquid is supplied through annular ducts and is discharged into an atomizing stream (figure 5). It is the position of the examiner that this reads on producing an upward spray of coating fluid by means of a two-fluid nozzle. A perforated bottom plate is used to provide gas jets that are acentral and intersect the centerline of the spray (figure 1). As the powder spins in a circular motion around the bed, it is inherent that the powder would have an end-over-end movement as well. From the movement lines (6) of figure 1, it is shown that the jets guide the powder over the nozzle, thereby increasing the number of suspended bodies contacting the spray. The liquid is injected into a high velocity gas stream that breaks up the liquid (column 4, lines 1-5). This

reads on providing an atomization gas to the two-fluid nozzle. A curved valve is used in the nozzle in order to reduce scattering effects (column 3, lines 49-65)---" (emphasis added).

Without admitting or denying that the Examiner has correctly characterized the disclosure of the reference to Lippert, it is respectfully pointed out that the Examiner has ignored a critical limitation set forth in the claims in applying the cited references thereagainst. Attention is directed to the fact that the present claims are limited to coating methods wherein:

"the bodies are pneumatically transported in the coating zone in a non-fluidized state".

Attention is further directed to the fact that the Lippert reference is limited to coating methods wherein the coating method is carried out while the particles to be coated are maintained in a fluidized state. See the Abstract; paragraph bridging cols. 1 and 2; col. 2, ll 28-30, ll 38-40 and Fig. 1, ll 44-45 and Fig. 2, l 46 and Fig. 3, ll 53-54 and Fig. 6, l 58, l 62, l 65, l 72; col. 3, l 5, l 11, l 15, l 23, l 42, ll 52-53, l 61, l 66; col. 4, ll 5-6; and the claims.

Nor is the Examiner's position helped by the secondary reference to Brown, the disclosure of which is also limited to fluidized bed coating methods. See the Title; Abstract; col. 1, ll 5-12; col. 2, ll 36-54; col. 3, ll 3-8; paragraph bridging cols. 3 and 4; Fig. 1; col. 4, 3d full paragraph, l 53; paragraph bridging cols. 4 and 5; col. 5, first full paragraph, l 33, last full paragraph; col. 6, ll 33-36, l 49; paragraph bridging cols. 6 and 7; col. 7, ll 3-37; the Figures, and the claims..

Nowhere in either of the references is there a disclosure of a method wherein the coating method is described except in the context that the particles to be coated are

suspended via a fluidized bed. As pointed out above, a critical element of the claimed invention is that it is conducted in a manner such that the particles to be coated are not suspended in a fluidized condition during the coating operation. See page 2, fourth full paragraph and the disclosure from the paragraph bridging pages 2 and 3 through page 5, wherein the disadvantages associated with fluidized bed coating methods and systems are pointed out.

The entire thrust of the claimed invention is the provision of a method and system whereby small particles can be uniformly coated with fluid materials without employing any fluidized bed principles. Since the references relied upon by the Examiner are strictly limited to fluidized-bed coating methods, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

The rejection of claims 5 and 9 under 35 V.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lippert (3,386,182) in view of Brown (4,080,927) and further in view of Inaoka is respectfully traversed. The reference to Inaoka is cited to show that the coating of particles of the size set forth in claims 5 and 9 would be an obvious variant of the methods disclosed by Lippert and Brown. Notwithstanding any disclosure by Brown of specific particle sizes; however, the fact remains that the reference does not supply the deficiencies of the primary reference, namely, the disclosure of a non-fluidized bed method or system for coating particulate material.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is also respectfully requested.

Applicant has earnestly endeavored to pace the application in condition for allowance and an early action toward that end is respectfully requested.

Since the references of record contraindicate the claimed process, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner believe that any further action is necessary to place this application in better form for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' representative at the telephone number listed below.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (628-8711US04) any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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